

EPIC

EFFECTIVE PLANNING AND INNOVATIVE  
COMMUNICATION

EPIC 'Ohana Conferencing  
is a neutral,  
non-profit organization.  
**We are not part of  
DHS/CWS/CPS.**

For additional information,

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MISSION STATEMENT

*Families are the foundation of our community, and their well-being is inextricably linked to the health and prosperity of the community, state, and nation. EPIC transforms the culture of child welfare practice through a respectful, collaborative, solution-oriented process that protects children, strengthens families, and enhances the health of the community.*



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'OHANA CONFERENCING

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EPIC, INC.

E Makua Ana  
Youth Circle

*Becoming an adult...*



# E MAKUA ANA YOUTH CIRCLE

## **E MAKUA ANA YOUTH CIRCLE**

For youth aged 16 through 21 who are in foster care. A Geist grant extends eligibility to those youth 16 through 24 who were in a state-sponsored out-of-home placement. The program provides a group process for youths to celebrate their emancipation from foster care and to assist them in planning for their independence. Ideally, a youth will have at least three Youth Circles by the time they age out of foster care with additional Youth Circles after turning 18.

## **PRE-CIRCLE MEETING OR PHONE CALL**

After a youth's case is referred to the EPIC 'Ohana Conferencing office for a Youth Circle, a facilitator is assigned. The facilitator will arrange an in-person meeting or phone call to explain the purposes of the Youth Circle and gain their consent to hold one.

## **E MAKUA ANA YOUTH CIRCLE IS YOUTH DRIVEN**

The youth decides if they want to have a Youth Circle. If the youth wants a Youth Circle, she or he decides who will be invited (at least one supporter must be identified besides the social worker for a Circle to be held); how the Circle will be opened; the type of food and drink to be served; and at the conclusion of the Circle, decide what will be their plan for independence. If a youth does not want a Youth Circle, their wishes are respected and no Youth Circle is held.

## **E MAKUA YOUTH CIRCLE IS SOLUTION-FOCUSED**

The program applies a solution-focused approach as developed by Insoo Kim Berg and Steve de Shazer. Rather than focusing on problems, the focus of the Youth Circle is on what the youth wants for their future and how their goals may be attained. Problems are discussed only if the youth brings them up for discussion.

## **WHO WILL BE THERE?**

The youth decides who will be invited to the Circle. Social worker, friends, family, teachers, counselors, service providers, and any other people the youth wants to attend their Circle may be invited.

## **WHAT DOES THE YOUTH NEED TO DO BEFORE THE YOUTH CIRCLE?**

- 1) Think of at least five (5) goals for their future; they can be short or long term goals or both.
- 2) Prepare an "opening" for the Circle, i.e., a poem, song, prayer, words of inspiration, etc.
- 3) Recall something they have accomplished while with CPS that they are proud of and would like to share with others.

## **WHAT KIND OF DECISIONS WILL BE MADE?**

Circle participants will generate options for housing, education, finances, employment, documents (i.e., birth certificate, social security card, etc.), transportation, physical and emotional health. The youth will choose what plan they want to pursue. A Transition Plan and Summary of the Circle will be provided for the youth and participants shortly after the Circle is held.

## **HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?**

Youth Circles usually take about three hours.

## **WHAT ABOUT THE FOOD?**

EPIC will provide food and drink for each Circle. The youth selects the type of food they would like served.

## **DO YOU STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?**

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## **E MAKUA ANA YOUTH CIRCLE MODEL**

Welcome & Opening - If the youth does not have an opening, participants give silent thanks to a person who has helped them become who they are today.

Introductions - Everyone in Circle states their name and relationship to the youth.

Purpose & Guidelines - To assist the youth in developing a transition plan for their future independence. Participants speak one at a time, and respect confidentiality laws.

Youth is asked - "What is something you are proud of that you've accomplished while with CPS that you'd like people to know about?"

Youth's Strengths - Each person shares strengths they have observed in the youth.

Youth Describes Their Goals - Short and Long-term goals are identified by the youth.

Group Brainstorms Resources - Participants generate resources for the youth.

Youth Private Time - A break is taken and food is provided while the youth selects their Transition Plan. The youth may ask anyone in the Circle to assist them during their Private Time.

Youth's Presentation of Transition Plan - The youth presents the Transition Plan they selected to the Circle participants.

Volunteers and Timelines Established - Participants volunteer to help the youth with their Plan. Timelines are established and a date is set for completion.

Supporters - The youth identifies members of their support system

Follow-Up Circle Date - A date for a follow-up Circle is selected.

Circle Closing - Participants provide words of encouragement for the youth.